

## **Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?**

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Is co-operative housing a creative solution to Australia's housing crisis?

- **Format:**

Written paper

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

Although cooperative housing today in Australia can still be linked to radicalism associated with the squatter movement of the 1970s, the model has come a long way. Despite there being over a billion members of co-operatives worldwide, this housing model has been rather sporadic in Australia. But with the Australian housing affordability at an all-time high and increasing, alternative models such as co-operatives or community housing could provide some answers to providing more affordable housing.

Until now, co-operatives have coped with inconsistent state and territory legislation and competitive disadvantages in comparison to entities that operate under the Corporations Act 2001. In 2007, the State and Territory Ministers agreed to implement nationally uniform legislation to address the inconsistencies and competitive disadvantages that the previous legislations gave to co-operatives. Some of these positive changes include co-operatives to have the freedom to operate on a national basis and to provide co-operatives with better access to external capital funding. Non-profit organisations have been actively pushing for a change in the state

government's approach towards co-op housing to meet the growing demand for the social and economic benefits it can provide for people.

Although there are many different forms of co-operatives, they all share one fundamental element: collective ownership. Collective ownership means affordability, security, a decent place to live, transparency in management, a strong commitment towards social goals and the possibility of personal growth by gaining new skills and knowledge.

The success of housing co-operatives can perhaps be seen in Europe, where different models of co-operatives or community housing have become a more common form of real estate and are not just seen as some form of social housing. In Switzerland, housing co-ops represent 57 per cent of the non-for profit rental stock and 4.3 per cent of the total housing stock. In contrast, the trend in Australia is still towards providing less social housing and concentrating on more market driven housing. Co-operative housing in Australia in 2012 only represented 0.06 per cent of the total housing stock.

This paper will discuss the success of co-operate housing in Switzerland and will examine two case studies, Heizenholz in Zurich-Hoengg and Zwicky in Duebendorf. Although a community based and social way of living will challenge the traditional way Australian's live, it could just provide some answers to the current housing affordability crisis.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Petra Perolini is a lecturer and course convenor in Interior Design and Environments at Griffith University. Petra has a Bachelor Degree in Interior Architecture and a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning and Design Futures and is a current PhD candidate at Griffith University. Her research explores making essential links between understanding the complexity interior design ontologically occupies in a predominantly non-reflective practice approach. Petra has also worked on a number of projects, which support social inclusion and community housing. Petra's teaching areas are in all year levels of Interior Design and Environments. Her projects are often embedded in real-world scenarios and respond to present and future needs in progressive ways. This allows students to address current and pressing social and environmental issues that affect city living globally today. Some recent projects include social and spatial injustice, social exclusion and fragmentation. Her pedagogy focuses on design and new practice, encompassing interdisciplinary design to push design thinking beyond current practice.